

## Message Text

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21

ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 SSC-01 CPR-01

DODE-00 /017 W

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R 090710Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8710

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 5742

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PINR, SN

SUBJ: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON PUNCH COOMARASWAMY, SINGAPORE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO US

REF: STATE 195118

1. COOMARASWAMY, SINGAPORE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO AUSTRALIA SINCE AUGUST 1973, IS HARD WORKING PROFESSIONAL WHO HAS KEEN INSIGHT INTO AUSTRALIAN POLITICS AND IS A FIRSTCLASS ANALYST OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS. DURING WHITLAM'S REGIME, HE TENDED TO "MAKE FUN" OF AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS TO COTTON UP TO THE NON-ALIGNED THIRD WORLD AND REGARDED LABOR GOVERNMENT'S THINKING ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES AS SOMEWHAT NAIVE AND FUZZY. HE OFTEN EXPRESSES HIS VIEW THAT ASEAN COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY MALAYSIA AND THAILAND, NEED TO CONCENTRATE MORE ON INTERNAL SECURITY AND HE INITIALLY ANTICIPATED THAT VIETNAMESE WOULD TAKE MUCH MORE ACTIVE ROLE THAN THEY SEEM TO HAVE IN TRYING SUBVERT NEIGHBORING REGIMES IN SOUTH EAST ASIA. HE IS OUTSPOKEN ABOUT THE NECESSITY FOR THE UNITED STATES TO MAINTAIN GLOBAL SECURITY ROLE, MAJOR ROLE MILITARILY IN PACIFIC, AND APPROPRIATE ROLE IN INDIAN OCEAN. HE PERSONALLY POOH POOHS IDEA OF INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE. HE APPEARS TO HAVE GENERALLY FAVORABLE VIEWS TOWARD THE UNITED STATES AND IS FRIENDLY TO AMERICANS.

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2. COOMARASWAMY HAS A VERY OUTGOING PERSONALITY. HE IS SMALL, QUICK, AND WITTY, WITH A FUND OF AMUSING STORIES FOR ANY OCCASION. HE PLAYS TENNIS, IS WIDELY READ, SMOKES CIGARETTES AND DRINKS MODERATELY AND ALWAYS SEEMS READY TO SUGGEST TO THE PUNTER A GOOD HORSE. WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT ANY FOREIGN LANGUAGE CAPABILITY HE MAY HAVE.

3. THE COOMARASWAMYS HAVE THREE CHILDREN: A 19 YEAR OLD SON, WHO IS DOING NATIONAL SERVICE; A DAUGHTER OF 16; AND A SONE OF 12. WE DON'T HAVE THEIR NAMES BUT MAY BE ABLE TO GET THEM. PUNCH'S WIFE, KAILA, IS ALSO OUTGOING - VERY FRANK-- AND ALSO GIFTED WITH A FUND OF AMUSING STORIES AND OBSERVATIONS. SHE IS VERY PROTECTIVE OF HER CHILDREN. HER ENGLISH TOO IS EXCELLENT.  
HARGROVE

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## Message Attributes

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